Robert E. Howard's

CONAN

THE PIT OF KUTALLU

2d20

Robert E. Howard's
CONAN
ADVENTURES IN AN AGE UNDREAMED OF

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF CONAN

It is the Hyborian Age, a time of antiquity and renewal, brutality and beauty. Kingdoms rise amidst the remains of bygone lands. Forgotten secrets of sorcery, ancient artifacts, and devices of strange science lurk undiscovered in moldering ruins and lost cities, to be discovered by the daring or the unwary. Gods flourish and are forgotten, but the great black vale of eternity remains, and within this Outer Dark loom cosmic horrors of an unimaginable scale, evil beyond comprehension. Humankind crawls back from savagery, and nations prepare to rage across the map, ready to sweep civilization away in a tide of blood and iron.

It is a place of heroic adventure and triumph. Here, the bold may prosper and history has yet to be written. So, dog brothers and sword sisters, make ready to step into the world of Conan! Tread the paths he has walked, or blaze new trails across the rich and storied kingdoms, glimmering beneath ancient stars. Drink life to its deepest, exult in the mad flame of battle, and seize glory enough to outlast the march of time!

WITHIN THESE PAGES...

The Pit of Kutallu comes with a summarized version of the 2d20 system for *Robert E. Howard's Conan: Adventures in an Age Undreamed Of*, a game of dramatic pulp adventure and heroic conflict. The adventure itself strands the characters in an exotic ruin, pitted against ancient evil. The gamemaster should read these rules beforehand, at least once. However, the adventure introduces game concepts as they are encountered, to help everyone start playing *Conan* as quickly as possible.

The gamemaster serves as the storyteller, narrator, and rules referee, and the players each control a player character. The gamemaster represents other characters — called non-player characters — that might be people, monsters, or even gods.

The next section address all of the rules needed to play this adventure, beginning with a description of how player characters are constructed, how actions are attempted and resolved, and the results from actions, such as doing (and taking damage) and other qualities of success.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Robert E. Howard's Conan: Adventures in an Age Undreamed Of features a full character creation system, allowing you to create your own characters, ready for adventure. Here, we have included four pre-generated player characters on pages 28-31 to get you started.

ATTRIBUTES

Each player character has seven **Attributes** that indicate inherent abilities, as well as physical and mental limitations. They usually range from 6 to 12, with 8 as average. Higher ratings represent greater ability.

- **Agility:** Physical and manual dexterity, sense of balance, body control, and reflexes.
- **Awareness:** Perceptions, sensory acuity, gut feelings, and instincts.
- **Brawn:** Strength, toughness, endurance, and the ability to apply physical force.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

In addition to a gamemaster and 1–4 players, you'll need the following:

- **CHARACTERS:** One pre-generated character sheet for each player, from on pages 28-31.
- **TWENTY-SIDED DICE (d20s):** This game uses two twenty-sided dice (2d20); however, having as many as 6d20 is more convenient.
- **SIX-SIDED DICE (d6s):** You'll need a dozen or so six-sided dice (d6s) to use as Combat Dice (see page 11).
- **PAPER, PENS, PENCIL, ETC.:** To draw maps, keep notes, and track conditions.
- **TOKENS OR BEADS:** Anything convenient: poker chips, coins, etc. You should have at least three per player, a dozen or more for the gamemaster's Doom pool, and at least six to track Momentum. There are also official CONAN Combat Dice, and Fortune and Doom tokens.

- **Coordination:** Hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness.
- **Intelligence:** Wit, intellect, cunning, reason, and the ability to apply knowledge.
- **Personality:** Charisma, social manipulation, and the ability to be threatening or charming as required.
- **Willpower:** Grit, determination, and mental resilience.

SKILLS

Skills represent training in a particular field — knowledge, proficiency in tools, conditioning, special techniques, etc. Each skill is tied to a particular Attribute, representing a foundation that the Attribute provides to use of the skill. *For example, the Craft and Lore skills are based on Intelligence.*

Skill Expertise

Expertise represents mastery of the particular skill, increasing the likelihood of success. Expertise is added to the relevant Attribute to determine the chance of success. This is the **Target Number** (TN). *For example, M'tanga's Coordination Attribute is 10. He has Sailing Skill Expertise 2, totalling 12 (10+2). He must roll a 12 or lower to succeed on Sailing tests.*

Skill Focus

Focus in a skill is achieved through constant practice, superior discipline, and deeper insight. Focus with a skill improves the quality of success. Unlike Skill Expertise, it is not added to the Attribute. *For example, Hypatia has Survival Skill Focus 3. Any time she rolls 1, 2, or 3 on Survival tests, Hypatia gets an additional success.*

SKILL TESTS

Whenever attempting a task where the outcome is in doubt, make a skill test to determine if the task succeeds or fails. **Do not roll for skill tests when the outcome is obvious or unimportant.**

TARGET NUMBER (TN)

The Target Number (TN) is determined by adding the relevant Attribute to Skill Expertise.

DIFFICULTY

The gamemaster determines a task's Difficulty (rated 1–5). In most cases, the gamemaster determines a Difficulty for a task, and this Difficulty may be Difficulty levels and examples are described on the *Test Difficulty* table (opposite).

SKILL LIST

Following are all of the skills characters will use, listed below the linked Attribute:

AGILITY
- Acrobatics
- Melee
- Stealth

AWARENESS
- Insight
- Observation
- Survival
- Thievery

BRAWN
- Athletics
- Resistance

COORDINATION
- Parry
- Ranged Weapons
- Sailing

INTELLIGENCE
- Alchemy
- Craft
- Healing
- Lore
- Linguistics
- Warfare

PERSONALITY
- Animal Handling
- Command
- Counsel
- Persuade
- Society

WILLPOWER
- Discipline
- Sorcery

TEST DIFFICULTY		
Name	Successes	Examples
Simple (D0)	0	Opening a slightly stuck door. Researching a widely known subject. Hitting a stationary archery target during practice.
Average (D1)	1	Overcoming a simple lock. Researching a specialist subject. Shooting an enemy at optimal (medium) range.
Challenging (D2)	2	Overcoming a complex lock. Researching obscure information. Shooting an enemy at optimal range in poor light.
Daunting (D3)	3	Overcoming a complex lock in a hurry. Researching basic historical information. Shooting an enemy at long range in poor light
Dire (D4)	4	Overcoming a complex lock in a hurry, without the proper tools. Researching esoteric historical information. Shooting an enemy at long range, in poor light and heavy rain.
Epic (D5)	5	Overcoming a complex lock in a hurry, without the proper tools, and in the middle of a battle. Researching purposefully obscured historical information. Shooting an enemy at extreme range in poor light and heavy rain.

Conan sprang to meet him, and all his tigerish strength went into the arm that swung the sword. In a whistling arc the great blade flashed through the air and crashed on the Bossonian's helmet. Blade and casque shivered together and Gromel rolled lifeless on the floor. Conan bounded back, still gripping the broken hilt.

— "The Phoenix on the Sword"

MOMENTUM AND DOOM

The game runs off of two main resources: MOMENTUM and DOOM. Doom is used by the gamemaster to introduce additional hardship on the players, to activate non-player character abilities, and to make things more challenging for the players. Whenever player characters wish to use Immediate Momentum (such as to buy an extra d20 for a test), they may do so by adding 1 to Doom instead of spending 1 Momentum.

Similarly, any excess Momentum from non-player character skill tests are added to the Doom pool, and can be spent by the gamemaster as Doom.

BASIC SKILL TEST

Roll 2d20 to make a **skill test**. Do not add them together. Try to roll as low as possible. Each d20 that rolls equal to or less than the test's Target Number is a **success**. Each d20 equal to or less than the Focus in the skill generates an **extra success**. When the number of successes are equal to or higher than the Difficulty of the test, the task is a success. Difficulties are defined by the number of successes required, such as Average (D1). Dice are only rolled once for a specific skill test, unless the circumstances for the test have dramatically changed or the test involves prolonged exertion (see *Struggles* page 6).

UNTRAINED TESTS

Player characters can attempt **untrained skill tests** using skills in which they possess no Expertise. The Target Number for the test is equal to the relevant Attribute, unmodified. However, unskilled tests are a little sloppier, and come with greater risk of mishap. Complications occur on rolls of 19 or 20 (instead of just 20) for skill tests made without any Skill Expertise.

COMPLICATIONS

Even when things go well, player characters can face challenges and setbacks. These are called **Complications**. Complications represent inconvenient changes of circumstances: obstacles to progress, loss of resources, or a temporary hindrance. Any roll of 20 on a test is a Complication. They are independent of success or failure, meaning that it is possible to succeed at a skill test while simultaneously suffering a Complication.

DOOM AS COMPLICATION

If no idea for an appropriate Complication springs to mind, the gamemaster can instead choose to add 2 Doom to the Doom pool. This method allows the gamemaster to refresh the Doom pool, accepting Doom instead of inflicting Complications on player characters.

If a gamemaster-controlled non-player character suffers a Complication, the gamemaster can have the non-player character suffer Complications, or the players can ask the gamemaster to remove 2 Doom from the Doom pool instead, if the gamemaster approves, though it cannot be reduced if it has only 1 or 0 Doom left.

Doom is explained further on page 8.

A Complication takes effect immediately after the skill test's results are resolved. Each 20 rolled is a specific Complication, so an unlucky roll can have multiple Complications. Multiple Complications can be resolved separately, or can be grouped into a bigger problem.

However, the gamemaster can choose to earn 2 Doom instead of applying a Complication. If a non-player character gets a Complication, the gamemaster can pay 1 Doom to ignore it. See *Doom as a Complication* (above).

MOMENTUM

When the successes scored on a skill test are greater than the Difficulty rating, any excess become **Momentum**. Momentum can be spent immediately to perform the task faster or more effectively, or it can be saved and applied to subsequent actions on the same turn. **Up to 6 Momentum may be saved at any given time.** If a skill test is unsuccessful, no Momentum is earned.

Momentum can also represent cooperation, group dynamics, leadership, action coordination, assistance, and other teamwork. Players that have saved Momentum can also spend it to assist the actions of other player characters, who can then use that Momentum in addition to any Momentum that they might generate themselves through successful skill tests or other effects.

If players wish to share Momentum or save it beyond their turn, they place it in a **Momentum pool** from which all the players can draw. Players cannot hold onto Momentum of their own beyond their turn: Momentum is either used

immediately or during the player character's turn, then must be placed in the shared pool or discarded.

Most uses of Momentum happen immediately after a successful skill test, though the player or gamemaster does not have to choose how to use it until it is actually needed.

Each use of Momentum can only be used once on each skill test, unless that use is noted as **Repeatable**. Some uses of Momentum are listed as **Immediate**. This means they can be used at any time, spending points directly out of the pool of saved Momentum.

Players are encouraged to be creative with Momentum, but the gamemaster has the final say on the outcome of spent Momentum, especially when it concerns the non-player characters or the setting.

Turning the Tide

While succeeding at common tasks is straightforward, even the most proficient character cannot succeed at the most difficult tasks without effort, opportunity, or assistance. A lucky roll and Skill Focus can yield enough successes to overcome higher Difficulties some of the time, but to for greater Difficulties, another method must be used to improving the odds. This is normally done by finding some way to add extra d20s to the skill test.

No more than three additional d20s (5d20 in total) can be used on a single skill test. The only exception is **teamwork**, where characters can work together, contributing d20s towards a single task. Any additional d20s from Momentum or other bonuses must be added before the test is attempted.

Momentum Depletion

At the end of each scene, and at the end of each round during an action scene, the players lose 1 Momentum from their shared pool.

Buying Extra Dice with Doom

As noted in *Momentum*, 1 Momentum (Immediate, Repeatable) can buy +1d20 for a skill test. Alternately, players can add to the Doom pool, with 1 Doom buying +1d20.

STRUGGLES

Whenever characters oppose one other, or are competing towards the same goal, each performs a skill test. This is a **Struggle**. In a Struggle, the character earning the most Momentum (successes in excess of the Difficulty) succeeds, achieving the goal. The winner reduces their Momentum by an amount equal to the loser's Momentum to determine the final outcome.

If there are no other factors involved, the Difficulty of a Struggle is usually Simple (D0), or Average (D1) when attacking and defending in combat. Struggles with higher

EXAMPLE USES OF MOMENTUM		
Desired Effect	**Cost**	**Conditions**
Perform a task in half the normal time	1	
Add +1 damage on a successful attack	1 per +1	Repeatable
Disarm an opponent	2	
Add an additional d20 to a skill test, before the roll is made	1 per d20	Immediate, Repeatable
Increase an opponent's skill test difficulty by +1	2 per +1	Immediate, Repeatable
Ask the gamemaster a pertinent question about the situation, the characters present, or something else that the player character might be able to discern with that skill test	1 per piece of info	Repeatable

Difficulties represent situations when everyone participating in the task has the potential to fail. If either side suffers some circumstance that makes things more challenging than for their opponent, the gamemaster should adjust the Difficulty of the test for that side.

In the case of a tie, a player character wins against any non-player character, unless the gamemaster spends 1 Doom to break the tie. If two player characters are tied, the outcome is either a tie, or the gamemaster randomly determines the winner.

FORTUNE

Player characters have Fortune, a resource representing drive, ambition, and determination. With Fortune, player characters can succeed where others might fail. **Player characters begin each session with 3 points of Fortune, and cannot have more than 5 Fortune at any point.**

A player character can spend a point of Fortune before attempting a skill test to "buy" a bonus d20 to use with the skill test. However, unlike Momentum dice, this d20 is not rolled. Instead, it is simply set on the table with the 1 facing up, as if the player had rolled the best possible result. The special result is then counted normally, which means it automatically counts as a success, or two successes if the character has 1 or more points of Focus with that skill.

Spending Fortune

Players can spend Fortune like this:

- **Bonus Die:** Add +1d20 to a skill test, up to the maximum of +3d20. Do not roll the d20. It is treated as having automatically rolled a 1.

- **Bonus Action:** Perform an additional Standard Action during a turn.

- **Second Wind:** Recover all lost Vigor or Resolve (choose one).

> ## TRACKING MOMENTUM
>
> A useful method of tracking Momentum — player and/or group — is to place a large or distinctive-looking d6 in a highly visible place, with the number indicating current Momentum. If the d6 shows a 3, there are 3 points of Momentum available. Another method is to use a pool of tokens or additional d20s to track the amount of saved Momentum. Just don't mix them up with other dice or tokens!
>
> Whichever the case, everyone should try to keep the amount of saved Momentum visible to everyone at the table, to make coordinating actions easier!

- **Overcome Weakness:** Ignore effects of Wounds or Trauma (choose one) until the end of the current scene.

- **Story Declaration:** Introduce a fact or add a detail to the current scene. The gamemaster may veto some story declarations, or require multiple Fortune points for particularly large or significant declarations.

Earning Fortune

Players earn Fortune in the following ways:

- Invoking a **Trait** in play, describing how it affects the character's actions and behavior.

- Reaching a significant milestone in the adventure or character's development.

- Creating entertaining moments at the table.

- Other in-game accomplishments as determined by the gamemaster.

There should be two or three opportunities to gain Fortune points per hour of play.

DOOM

The gamemaster's greatest advantage is Doom. Doom measures potential threats and dangers: the larger the pool of Doom, the greater the likelihood something imperils the player characters. Spending Doom turns potential danger into actual problems. **At the beginning of a session, the Doom pool has a number of points equal to the total number of Fortune points at the table.** During each adventure, the Doom pool grows and shrinks as player characters take action and the gamemaster responds (and vice versa).

Using Doom

Doom is used for non-player characters the same way player characters use Momentum, though in reverse, with the gamemaster removing Doom when actions would normally put Doom into the pool. Similarly, when a non-player character would suffer a Complication, the gamemaster pays points out of Doom.

- **Resources:** Reloads and other expendable resources are not tracked individually for non-player characters. Instead, a non-player character gains the benefit of a single resource by paying 1 Doom.

- **Activating Special Abilities:** The gamemaster may spend Doom to activate potent abilities or equipment possessed by the non-player characters.

- **Seize the Initiative:** The gamemaster may spend 1 Doom to interrupt turn order and allow one of the non-player characters to act before the player characters.

- **Triggering an Environmental Effect:** The gamemaster can spend Doom to add environmental effects that affect gameplay. These add to the Difficulty of skill tests, or force tests where one was not previously required. Minor effects (flickering candle light, crumbling walls, thick smoke, etc.) cost 1 Doom. Major effects cost 2+ Doom and may pose impediments to the player characters, even causing them short-lived conditions or harm (physical or mental).

- **Other Obstacles:** The gamemaster can introduce other obstacles into a scene. As a general guideline, 1 Doom creates an obstacle requiring a Minor Action to fix, overcome, or circumvent. Two Doom points spent on an obstacle should require a Standard Action to resolve it.

TEAMWORK

Multiple characters can work together when facing a task too great for one character, assuming the situation, time, and the gamemaster permit it. With teamwork, one character is the leader, the others assistants. Depending on circumstances, only a few characters may assist, or other limitations might apply.

To assist with a skill test, each player must describe how their character is assisting the leader. If the gamemaster approves, each assistant rolls an Average (D1) skill test using only 1d20 instead of 2d20. The leader makes a normal skill test. Assistants may not use any means to roll additional dice, though the leader may use Momentum, Doom, Fortune, resources, or any other methods of gaining extra d20s. Because these dice are rolled by other characters, they do not count towards the limit of three bonus d20s applied to a task.

If the leader scores at least 1 success, any successes generated by the assistants are added to the leader's total. If the leader does not generate any successes, then the assistants' successes are lost, their efforts negated by unsuccessful leadership.

Assistants do not have to use the same skill as the leader: assistance may sometimes be provided with different knowledge and training. In such cases, the gamemaster should determine how different skills might be utilized in pursuit of the same goal.

ACTION SCENES

No matter where they go, characters will confront fierce and determined foes — whether man, beast, or monstrous other — in perilous conflicts, collectively described as **action scenes**.

ROUNDS

Action scenes are divided into **rounds**. Each round represents a measure of time in which characters can attempt actions and respond to opposing actions. Rounds are of no fixed duration, their length varying based on the encounter in question. An intense battle in the cramped corridors of a ruined castle may have rounds lasting only a few seconds, while a sea battle involving ships maneuvering for position may have rounds that last for minutes.

ACTIONS

Regardless of how much time a round represents, each character involved has a single **turn** in that round. Each turn, a character can take a single Standard Action, a single Minor Action, and any number of Free Actions. Generally, characters cannot perform the same action more than once in a round.

- **Standard Actions:** Standard Actions are the focus of action scenes and require attention and effort. A character can also use a Standard Action to perform any Minor action.

- **Minor Actions:** Minor Actions do not require much energy or effort, but require a certain level of attention.

- **Free Actions:** Free Actions require very little time or effort. Characters can perform any number of Free Actions on their turn (at the gamemaster's discretion), but cannot perform the same Free Action more than once during any given turn.

- **Reactions:** Reactions do not occur during a character's turn, but are triggered by some other event (like an enemy attacking). Many Reactions turn an enemy's skill test into a Struggle. A character may perform several Reactions during a round, but at an increasing cost: the first Reaction a character attempts in one round costs 1 Doom. The second Reaction costs 2 Doom, the third Reaction costs 3, and so forth, with each successive Reaction costing 1 more Doom than the previous Reaction. Player character add Doom to the Doom pool, and non-player characters pay from it.

TURN ORDER

Player characters usually act first each round. The players decide who acts next, but once a character's turn begins all actions must be resolved before other characters can take their turns. Once all the player characters have taken their turns, all of the non-player characters take their turns (in whatever order the gamemaster wishes). After everyone has taken their turns, the round is over. Momentum is depleted by 1 and a new round begins.

INDECISION

If players spend too much time deliberating while in an action scene, rather than taking action, the gamemaster can add 1 Doom to the Doom pool, a warning that they are ceding the initiative to their opponents. If the deliberation continues, the gamemaster can add additional Doom, warning the players periodically until they act, or until the gamemaster chooses to spend Doom, allowing the non-player characters to act first (see *Seizing the Initiative*, page 8, and below).

Seizing Initiative

At the start of the round, before anyone has acted, or at any time between player character turns, the gamemaster can spend 1 Doom to allow a non-player character to immediately take a turn. The non-player character's actions are resolved normally. Once finished, the turn order passes back to the player characters, unless the gamemaster spends additional Doom to allow other non-player characters to act immediately. That non-player character does not get to act again that round.

Surprise

When one group of characters attempts to take another group of characters by surprise, the attempt is resolved as a Struggle (see page 6). Each side picks a leader to attempt the skill test, with other members assist, with the gamemaster awarding bonus Momentum, as appropriate.

WHAT TYPE OF ACTION IS IT?

Usually the type of action is obvious and already defined. At other times, the gamemaster needs to determine what type of action is required.
    Here are some rules of thumb:

- **Actions resolvable in the blink of an eye (dropping an item, for example) or done while simultaneously focusing on other tasks (talking) are probably FREE ACTIONS. It's not a Free Action if a skill test is required.**

- **Actions that require a Simple (D0) skill test or no skill test are Free Actions. However, rolling the dice for a Simple (D0) skill test to generate Momentum makes it a STANDARD ACTION.**

- **Actions requiring concentration or effort — but not a skill test — are probably MINOR ACTIONS.**

- **Actions requiring skill tests are usually STANDARD ACTIONS, unless specified otherwise.**

If the group attempting surprise succeeds at the Struggle, everyone on that side gains an Exploit Action (see page 14) for free and acts immediately at the start of combat. Non-player characters do not need to spend Doom to gain this, nor should the gamemaster spend Doom to override this.

If the group attempting surprise fails, the winners may choose to add 2 to Doom, or to spend 1 Fortune point (for the whole group) to gain the benefits of surprise instead. Typical surprise scenarios include an ambush (Stealth vs. Observation) or betraying allies at a peaceful celebration (Persuade vs. Insight).

ZONES

In an action scene it is important to know where everyone is at, and determining absolute position (where characters are) and relative position (how far apart anyone is from a given friend or foe) is crucial. Rather than using precise distances, action scene settings are divided into **zones**.

At the start of an action scene, the gamemaster defines its zones. Generally, three to five distinct zones are good, though this number varies depending on the nature of the scene. Each zone is a small, contiguous area. A zone is adjacent to one or more other zones, but may be separated from others by intervening zones. There are no hard-and-fast rules when it comes to defining the size or boundaries of a zone, but generally the dimension of a zone flows from the way the environment is described.

When defining a zone, everyone should also consider the landmarks by which characters define their positions. Because zones are of no fixed size, they can also be varied to accommodate other factors in the scene.

RANGE AND MOVEMENT

Distance between zones is handled loosely, using five range categories:

- **Reach** is essentially anything within arm's length. Characters enter Reach to interact with objects manually, to attack in close combat, and to perform other actions where they may need to touch the subject of that action. A character can move within Reach of a target as part of any movement action that ends in the same zone as the target. Moving out of an enemy's Reach may be risky, as it leaves characters open to the Retaliate Reaction unless they take a Withdraw Action. Retaliate and Withdraw are described on page 15.

- **Close range** is defined as the character's current zone. Moving within Close range is a Free Action.

- **Medium range** is defined as any zone adjacent to the character's current zone. Moving to a point within Medium range is a Minor Action.

- **Long range** is defined as any point two zones away from the character's current zone. Moving to a point within Long range is a Standard Action, but the Difficulty of all tests made by the character is increased by one step until the start of their next turn.

- **Extreme range** is defined as any point three or more zones away from the character's current zone. A character cannot move to Extreme range in a single action.

Zone Effects

Individual zones can have terrain effects defined by the gamemaster. Some options are described here: more are

CREATING DISTANCE WITH ZONES

For a scene in which there are only two zones of interest that should still feel distant from each other, the gamemaster can fill the space between with any number of "empty" zones to reflect this distance. Characters wishing to go from the first zone of interest to the second must first pass through these empty zones.
    Characters cannot perform more than one movement action per turn.

DISTANCE AND PERCEPTION

The further away something is, the harder it is to notice. The gamemaster should increase the Difficulty of Observation and Insight tests by one step at Medium range, by two steps at Long range, and by three steps at Extreme range.

provided in the **Conan** corebook. Additionally, the gamemaster is encouraged to create additional effects, as desired.

Under normal circumstances, moving requires no skill test. Moving to anywhere within Close range takes only a Free Action. Moving to anywhere within Medium range takes a Minor Action. Moving to anywhere within Long range takes a Standard Action, which adds one step of Difficulty to all other tests the character makes until the start of their next turn, including those to traverse difficult terrain.

However, movement in some circumstances may require a skill test, typically using either Acrobatics or Athletics for characters and creatures. Unusual terrain may require a different test, as when riding animals or operating vehicles. A situation may only allow use of one of these skills exclusively, or in some cases, either of them, depending on how the character attempts to traverse the terrain. If movement requires a skill test with a Difficulty of Average (D1) or higher, then it cannot be performed as a Free Action, even if the movement is only within Close range. Under no circumstances can a skill test be attempted as a Free Action.

Environments that require a test to move through are categorized as **Obstacles**, **Hindrances**, and **Hazards**. A fourth type, **Cover**, does not generally require a test, but has useful effects characters may take advantage of.

- **Obstacles:** Climbable walls and fences, ladders, and similar barriers can all serve as obstacles, impairing efforts to pass from one zone into another. Bypassing an obstacle usually requires an Average (D1) Acrobatics or Athletics test, modified by the gamemaster for easier or more challenging obstacles. Failing this test prevents the character from moving across the obstacle.

- **Hindrances:** These affect entire zones, slowing movement within them. Moving within a hindrance requires either giving up a portion of movement (moving one fewer zone than normal with that Action), or attempting a skill test, with failure meaning that the character stops moving within the hindering terrain. The test is normally Average (D1), but some terrain may require a more difficult test. Areas of deep water, thick snow, or broken ground might be considered to be hindrances.

- **Hazards:** These function in the same way as obstacles or hindrances, but they also cause harm upon a failed test. A typical hazard inflicts 3 physical damage with the Stun quality, but different hazards may vary in amount of damage, conditions applied, or even the type of damage.

- **Cover:** The most common terrain effect, representing objects that interfere with the ability to see or attack a target clearly. Cover provides Soak against physical attacks, as described in *Damage* and *Recovery* on pages 15 and 16, and is normally divided into Light Cover (providing Soak 2 🦅) and Heavy Cover (Soak 4 🦅).

ATTACKS

There are three ways to attack: Melee, Ranged, and Threaten. As a Standard Action, an attacker picks a single target within range and declares the type of attack to attempt. The target has the option of performing a Defense Reaction, in which case the attack is resolved as a Struggle, using the skills shown on the *Attack* table (below). If the target does not perform a Defense Reaction, the attacker makes an Average (D1) test with the skill required for that type of attack. The Difficulty of the attacker's tests may be modified by range.

ATTACK			
Attack	**Skill**	**Damage Type**	**Defense Reaction**
Melee	Melee	Physical	Parry
Ranged	Ranged Weapons	Physical	Acrobatics
Threaten	Persuade	Mental	Discipline

COMBAT DICE

Combat Dice 🦅 represent using d6s to determine damage and any additional conditions. When rolling a 🦅, ignore any results of 3 or 4. Results of 1 or 2 count as one or two successes, respectively, while a roll of 5 or 6 yields a success and an **Effect**. These are special qualities, usually attached to weapons.

COMBAT DIE	
Roll	**Value**
1	1
2	2
3,4	0
5,6	1, plus an Effect

They were following no marked trail, but dipping down into ravines so deep the sun never struck bottom, laboring up steep slopes where loose shale threatened to slide from beneath their feet, and following knife-edge ridges with blue-hazed echoing depths on either hand.

— **"The People of the Black Circle"**

Reach and Guard

Melee attacks can only be used within Reach, but each has a Reach value, describing relative length and use. Further, characters are considered to be at **Guard** when in melee. A character has Guard when standing, aware of an attack, and able to defend, but Guard is lost if knocked prone, or the attacker spends 2 Momentum after a successful attack. Guard is regained by taking a Minor Action and making a Parry test, with Difficulty equal to the opponent's Reach. If not in melee, this is a Free Action with a Simple (D0) test.

When making an attack, compare the Reaches of the weapons being used by the attacker and defender. If the defender has Guard, the Difficulty of the attack increases by one step for every point the defender's Reach is higher than

the attacker's. *For example, Average (D1) becomes Challenging (D2).* If the defender loses Guard, the attacker gains +1d20 for every point of Reach lower than the defender's Reach, having slipped past the defender's weapon or shield.

ARMOR AND SOAK

As shown on the Damage Table, each type of protection shields against damage from one type of attack. These protections are referred to as Soak, which comes as both a fixed value and as soak dice. Soak uses Combat Dice (🦅), as described on page 11. Soak dice (if any) are rolled at the same time as damage, and all Soak (fixed and rolled) reduces damage on a 1 for 1 basis. It is possible for Soak to reduce the damage of a successful attack to 0.

DAMAGE

If an attack is successful, it inflicts damage. The amount of damage is determined by the damage rating of the weapon or

MAKING AN ATTACK

The process for making an attack is as follows:

1. **Declare the attack:**

   a. **Choose the type of attack being made: MELEE, RANGED, or THREATEN.**

   b. **Choose a TARGET for the attack. The target chosen must be a viable type of target for the type of attack.**

   c. **Choose a WEAPON (for Melee and Ranged attack) or a METHOD of scaring the target (for a Threaten attack).**

   d. **The target chooses whether or not to make a DEFENSE Reaction.**

2. **The attacker makes a SKILL TEST to attack. This is an AVERAGE (D1) test, or a STRUGGLE if the target is taking a Defense Reaction.**

3. **If the attacker fails the skill test or is defeated in the Struggle, the attack ends. If the attacker succeeds, then the attacker rolls DAMAGE:**

   a. **The attacker rolls a number of COMBAT DICE 🦅 determined by the weapon/attack used**

and the associated attribute scores. Each 1 or 2 rolled applies that much damage. Each 5 or 6 rolled creates an EFFECT, which applies 1 damage and triggers certain attack qualities, such as Piercing or Vicious. Add up all the damage applied: this is the TOTAL DAMAGE.

   b. **The defender determines their total SOAK at the same time. This is a combination of fixed value (from Armour or Courage) and dice (cover and morale). Roll the 🦅 and add the total rolled (1s, 2s, and Effects) to the fixed value. The result is the character's total Soak.**

   c. **Subtract the defender's total Soak from the attacker's total damage. If one or more damage remains, this removes a number of points of STRESS equal to the number of points of remaining damage.**

   d. **If there are five or more points of damage remaining, or the defender is reduced to 0 Stress of that type, or the defender had no stress of that type remaining, the defender suffers a point of HARM.**

DAMAGE TYPES					
Damage Type	Stress	Soak	Harm	Recovery (Self)	Recovery (Other)
Physical (Creature)	Vigor (Brawn + Resistance)	Armor (static) + Cover (dice)	Wound (Agility, Brawn, Coordination)	Resistance	Healing
Physical (Object)	Structure	Armor (static) + Cover (dice)	Break (Any test involving structure)	—	Crafts
Mental	Resolve (Willpower + Discipline)	Courage (static) + Morale (dice)	Trauma (Awareness, Intelligence, Personality, Willpower)	Discipline	Counsel

method used to make the attack. Damage ratings represent the number of ❧ rolled on successful attacks.

Stress and Harm

Damage is removed from the appropriate type of Stress: physical attacks reduce **Vigor**, while mental attacks reduce **Resolve**.

If an attack causes 5+ damage or reduces Vigor or Resolve to 0, the character suffers 1 point of Harm. If both events occur, the character suffers 2 Harms. Harms have different effects depending on what caused the Harm.

- Physical damage inflicts Wounds. Each Wound increases the Difficulty of Agility, Brawn, and Coordination tests by one step.

- Mental damage inflicts Trauma, which increases the Difficulty of Awareness, Intelligence, Personality, and Willpower tests by one step.

The effect of Harms is cumulative.

Incapacitation and Death

A character suffering 4 points of Wounds or 4 points of Trauma is incapacitated and can only take an Action by spending a Fortune point.

- A character taking 5 Wounds dies.

- A character taking 5 Trauma is driven irrevocably mad or rendered comatose, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Weaker non-player characters are generally incapacitated or forced to flee if they suffer 1 or 2 points of Harm. At the gamemaster's discretion, significant non-player characters can endure Harm as player characters can.

RECOVERY

All Stress is recovered at the end of an action scene, with Vigor and Resolve returning to full. This is automatic, requiring only a brief rest.

Harm, though, must be treated using the appropriate skill (see the *Damage Types* table, above). A skill test to treat

RANGED COMBAT

Range

Ranged weapons and Threaten attacks can be used at a distance. Each has a listed range: Close (C), Medium (M), or Long (L), the optimal range category for that weapon. Attacks at that range suffer no range penalties. If the target is at a different range (nearer or further away), each range category difference increases the Difficulty of the skill test to attack by one step. Thus, a Close range weapon is at one higher Difficulty at Medium range, two steps at Long, and three steps at Extreme, while a Medium range weapon has one step of Difficulty more at Close or Long ranges, and two steps at Extreme.

Ranged Weapons

Usually, a ranged weapon is uses a single shot with each attack. This may be a handful of arrows, sling bullets, a crossbow bolt, or even a loose rock. Drawing a shot is part of the Standard Action used to make the attack, but when no more shots are available the ranged weapon can't be used again. At the end of an action scene, roll for each shot used. On an Effect, the shot is damaged, broken, or cannot be recovered. (See also *Volley*, page 17.) Melee weapons can be thrown as ranged weapons with a Range of Close, but as they're ill-balanced for this, the Ranged Weapons test increases in Difficulty by two steps. Each melee weapon counts as a single shot: once a sword has been thrown, it is no longer available for use until it is recovered.

Harm can be attempted only once per day, with a Difficulty equal to the number of Harms (of that type) the character suffers. On a success, 1 Harm is treated, +1 additional Harm (of that type) for each Momentum spent (Repeatable). Treated Harm imposes no penalties, but it isn't fully healed. If the character suffers a new Harm of that same type, the treated Harms immediately return due to the strain.

Complete healing takes time, rest, and possibly the attention of a healer.

OTHER COMBAT ACTIONS

Clear (Minor)

Attempt a skill test to end a current condition (such as Bleeding or Staggered). If the condition has a specific rating (such as Burning 3), the Difficulty of the test is equal to the rating. If not, the test is Challenging (D2). Physical conditions require a Resistance test and mental conditions a Discipline test.

Drop Item (Free)

Drop a single item held in one or both hands. The item falls within Reach.

Drop Prone (Free)

Drop to the ground immediately. Ranged attacks targeting a prone character at Medium range or further are made at one higher step of Difficulty and the prone character also gains Soak +2 for each Effect rolled on Cover dice. However, melee attacks and ranged attacks made at Close range gain +1 Momentum.

When making a movement action, a prone character moves one less zone than normal. A character cannot drop prone and stand in the same turn.

ALTERNATIVE HARM

Some attacks do not inflict Wounds or Trauma. They still reduce the victim's Stress, but instead of Harm they cause an alternative effect. These effects don't count towards the maximum number of Harms, but cause other impairments. These effects are specified in the adventure, where they occur.

Exploit (Standard)

Take additional time and concentration readying the next attack, to find vulnerabilities in the target's defenses. Nominate a target within sight and attempt an Average (D1) Observation test (modified by distance, lighting, etc.). If successful, the first attack before the end of the next turn gains the Piercing 2 Quality. The attacker may spend 1 point of Momentum on this test to add +1d20 to the attack's skill test and +1 to the attack's damage. This is Repeatable, but bonus d20s count towards the normal limit of three bonus d20s on any skill test. The benefits of this action can only be gained once per round.

ALTERNATE MODES OF ATTACK

Improvised Attack

A melee attack made without a weapon. It has a Reach of 1 and deals 2 physical damage, with the Stun, Thrown, and Improvised qualities (described on pages 17).

Steely Glare

A basic Threaten attack has a Range of Close, and deals 2 mental damage, with the Stun quality (see page 17).

Other Sources of Damage

Some environmental effects can also inflict damage, such as falling from a great height, being set on fire, or encountering something terrifying.

Ready (Standard)

A character can declare they are waiting for a certain situation or event to occur before performing a Standard Action, and describe the condition that will prompt that action. When this event occurs, the character with the Readied action temporarily interrupts the acting character's turn to resolve the Readied action. Once the Readied action is resolved, the acting character continues his turn as normal. If the triggering situation does not occur before the character's next turn, the readied action is lost. A character Readying an action can still take Minor and Free Actions during their turn as normal.

Recover (Standard)

Chooses a single type of damage (physical or mental), and attempt an Average (D1) skill test: Resistance for physical or Discipline for mental. On a successful test, regain 2 points of Vigor (physical) or Resolve (mental), +2 more points for each Momentum spent (Repeatable). When taking the Recover Action, re-roll any Cover dice, until the start of the next turn. Cover is explained on page 11.

Speak (Free)

Talk to allies, bellow a war cry, shout an order, threaten a rival, or otherwise converse using a few phrases or short sentences. This action cannot be used to attempt a Command or Persuade test, or to attempt any other skill test that involves speech. For these, see the Use Skill action (below).

Stand (Minor)

When prone, take this action to stand, losing all the benefits and disadvantages of being prone.

Use Skill (Standard)

It takes a Standard Action to perform any other task requiring an Average (D1) or higher skill test not already covered by another action.

Withdraw (Standard)

Leaving an enemy's Reach may provoke an attack using the Retaliate Reaction. Withdraw prevents this, allowing the character to move to any point within Close range not in an enemy's Reach. The Withdrawing character cannot be the target of a Retaliate Reaction that turn. This is a movement action.

If a character and their allies within Reach outnumber any enemies within Reach, the character may Withdraw as a Free Action instead of a Standard Action.

COMBAT REACTIONS

Defend

Defend turns an attacker's skill test into a Struggle, the defender's skill determined by the attack type (see the *Attack* table, page 11).

Protect

Defend an ally within Reach from attack, turning the attacker's skill test into a Struggle, against a Challenging (D2) test. If the skill test fails, the attack hits its original target. If the skill test is successful, the Protecting character becomes the new target, and any Momentum scored is used to determine whether or not the attack was successful, as normal for a Struggle. The skill used for this Reaction is the same as is used for an appropriate Defend Reaction.

Retaliate

Lash out at an enemy attempting to make a non-attack skill test while within Reach, or when an enemy attempts to move out of Reach without using the Withdraw action. Retaliate allows an immediate melee attack, that should be resolved before before the action it is a reaction to. If the melee attack is successful, the Retaliating character may spend Momentum to increase the Difficulty of the skill test being interrupted (see Sample Uses of Momentum, page 11), requiring a Simple (D0) test to bypass the obstacle.

Kerim Shah had unslung the powerful Turanian bow that killed at five hundred paces, and the Irakzai looked to their own lighter and less lethal bows.

— The Hour of the Dragon

MOMENTUM SPENDS		
Momentum Spend	**Cost**	**Effect**
Bonus Damage	1 R	A character can increase the damage inflicted by a successful attack regardless of the type of attack. Each Momentum spent adds +1 point of damage (not +1 ✹).
Confidence	1 R	The character gains 1 ✹ Morale Soak per Momentum spent (maximum 4 ✹) until the start of the next turn.
Disarm	2–3	One weapon held by the target is knocked away and falls to the ground within Reach. This costs 2 points of Momentum if the target is holding the weapon in one hand or 3 points of Momentum if the weapon is braced or held in two hands.
Penetration	1 R	The damage inflicted by the current attack ignores an amount of Soak equal to twice the Momentum spent.
Re-roll Damage	1	The player may re-roll any number of damage dice from the character's current attack.
Second Wind	1 I,R	The character chooses a type of damage and recovers 1 point for each Momentum spent in the associated capability.
Secondary Target	2	A second target within Reach of the primary target is also affected by the attack, and suffers half the attack's damage, rounding up (to a random hit location, if physical).
Swift Action	2	The character gains an additional Standard Action, increasing the Difficulty by one step on any skill test that action requires.
Withdraw	1	The character leaves the Reach of an enemy without triggering any Retaliate Reactions.

COMBAT MOMENTUM

Momentum is a key tactical resource. When characters generate Momentum in combat, they have options available which can help overcome enemies, empower allies, and bolster their own prowess.

The following table provides options available when characters generate Momentum in combat, but players should remember that they always have the option of creating new uses for Momentum. The gamemaster may also establish scene-specific Momentum spends.

Under Cost, an R means the spend is **Repeatable**, and an I means the spend is **Immediate**. If neither note is present, then the Momentum spend may only be used once per round.

CONDITIONS

Detrimental effects can afflict characters during action scenes. The most common are described below.

- **Dazed:** All skill tests by a Dazed character are increased in Difficulty by one step until the condition ends.

- **Hindered:** Movement is hindered, slowing the character down. The character cannot attempt any movement-based Free Action. Further, the character may only move to within Close range as a Minor Action move, and only to within Medium range as a Standard Action move. Finally, the Difficulty of all terrain movement tests is increased by one step.

- **Staggered:** Staggered characters can only perform Standard Actions in a turn by paying 1 Doom. To perform a Reaction, a Staggered character must spend 1 Fortune point in addition to the Doom.

WEAPONS

Weapons are defined by factors that determine their effectiveness in combat, any abilities it may possess, and other relevant information. They are divided into two categories: ranged and melee. Melee weapons are useful against targets within Reach, while ranged weapons are effective at range. All weapons have the following values: **Damage**, **Size**, and **Qualities**. Melee weapons also have **Reach**, while ranged weapons have **Range**. Damage is listed in ✹. Size determines how difficult the weapon is to wield. Qualities are the special abilities and Effects that apply to the weapon.

- One-handed (1H) weapons can be used in one or two hands without penalty.

- Two-handed (2H) weapons can be used in two hands without penalty; if used in one hand, the Difficulty of tests increases by two steps. Two-handed ranged weapons cannot be used in one hand.

- Unbalanced (Unb) weapons count as one-handed if the wielder has a Brawn 9+, or two-handed if Brawn is 8 or lower.

- Reach determines the length of the weapon, and how easy it is to fend off opponents using it. All melee weapons have a Reach of 1, 2, or 3, with higher values representing longer weapons. Weapons of different Reaches may have an advantage, as described on page 10.

- Range is listed as Close (C), Medium (M), or Long (L), describing the distance that the weapon is most effective, as described on page 13.

Qualities

The following Qualities are used in this adventure.

- **Grappling:** The weapon may ensnare the target if one or more Effects is rolled. An ensnared target is unable to move or take action except to attempt an Acrobatics or Athletics test equal to the number of Effects rolled. Against an ensnared target, the Difficulty of the Exploit Action is reduced by one step. If this is a melee weapon, the attacker may only attack the ensnared target while that target remains ensnared, though the target may be released as a Free Action.

- **Hidden X:** When concealed, a search of the owner requires an Observation test with a Difficulty (DX) to locate the weapon.

- **Improvised:** The weapon is flimsy or not meant as a weapon. It does not add 1 damage for each Effect rolled.

- **Intense:** The weapon inflicts 1 additional Wound if it inflicts 1 or more Wounds.

- **Knockdown:** If one or more Effects are rolled, the target is knocked prone. The target may ignore this by spending 1 Doom per Effect rolled.

- **Parrying:** The weapon is effective at deflecting attacks. Wielding one or more Parrying weapons reduces the Doom cost of a Defend or Protect Reaction using the Parry skill by 1, to a minimum of 0.

- **Piercing X:** The weapon is good at overcoming armor, ignoring X points of the target's Soak for each Effect rolled.

- **Shield X:** When wielding a Shield, the character may use Parry on Defense Reactions against ranged attacks, as well as melee attacks. A Shield X grants the wielder X ⬥ additional Cover Soak against melee and ranged attacks. Additionally, instead of suffering a Wound from an attack, the wielder may sacrifice the shield to avoid the Wound, destroying the shield.

- **Stun:** The weapon inflicts the Staggered condition to the target if one or more Effects are rolled, lasting until the end of the target's next turn. The target may ignore this by spending 1 Doom per each Effect rolled

- **Thrown:** When throwing a melee weapon with this Quality, the character does not increase the Difficulty of the Ranged Weapons test. Some weapons may be listed as Thrown (M), in which case they are treated as ranged weapons with a range of Medium when thrown.

- **Unforgiving X:** If the target of this weapon was affected by an Exploit immediately before this attack was made, the attack gains the Intense and Vicious X Qualities.

- **Vicious X:** A weapon with this Quality inflicts X additional damage for each Effect rolled.

- **Volley:** This ranged weapon can be used quickly, allowing the wielder to use more shots in a short space of time. Wielders often carry more ammunition as a result, carrying Loads rather than individual shots. When making an attack with a Volley weapon, the character does not need to use up a Load to make the attack. Further, when attacking with the weapon, the wielder may spend one Load in order to add +1d20 to the Ranged Weapons test, and adds +1 to the weapon's damage if the attack hits.

THE PIT OF KUTALLU

The *Pit of Kutallu* takes place on the southern coastal jungles of the Black Kingdoms, with the player characters recently captured by Kushite slavers. The adventure opens with the player characters in the hold of their captors' ship, just as it is caught in a storm.

BREAKING THE CHAINS

The gamemaster should read or summarize the following introduction:

Recently captured by slavers, you are in the hold of a slave ship headed for a slave market on the coast of the Black Kingdoms, facing a grim and uncertain future. But your fate is about to change. The slavers, led by their despicable Captain Kahero, have a prize… an Aquilonian noblewoman named Delia, captured alongside you. She will fetch a noble's bounty in Kush, and wants none of it.

She has offered all of you a way out if you agree to protect her and escort her to a safe port. In addition, she's willing to pay handsomely. This is far better than any deal you'll get in the slave markets of Kush, so you agreed.

One storm-tossed night, Delia obtained the keys to the cells, using charm and guile. Once freed from your chains, you discovered that the keys also provided access to the lockers where your seized equipment was stored.

Suddenly, the ship tossed as the storm increased in ferocity, waves hammering at the hull. Everyone is thrown as the ship strikes something, and with a great creaking crash, the hull reverberates, torn by a jagged spar of rock. Water floods in. The decks above thunder with the slavers' foot-beats, and the wind howls and roars, thirsty waves ready to claim the ship.

Your only salvation is the ship's dinghy, and you must kill your way through to seize it!

MAKING AN ESCAPE

The storm will provide ample distraction so that the player characters can re-equip and move to the deck. Whether they wish to free slaves in other cells is up to them. Varro, a noble warrior and player character (see page 28) is already pledged to Delia. The other player characters are lured by debt or the promise of wealth.

Once on deck, Kahero the slave-captain barks orders at his men, pushing them toward the dinghy. The slaves will drown with the ship. The ship is clearly lost, a gash in the side taking on water, impaled on a stony spear that continues to tear deeply into the hull. Through thick sheets of gray rain, and in flashes of lightning, a slim beach is visible in the distance. Survival is within reach.

However, the slavers aren't giving up the dinghy without a fight. While some lower it to the water, the remaining slavers attack the player characters. Captain Kahero does not join the fight, hanging back and sending his men at the player characters. If the first wave of slavers is slain, another wave abandons lowering the dinghy and focuses on the fight.

SLAVER (TOUGHENED)

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	7	7	7

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	10	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	—
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 5, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** 1 (Clothing), Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Cutlass (M):** Reach 2, 5🗡, Unbalanced, Vicious 1
- **Cudgel (M):** Reach 2, 5🗡, 1H, Stun, Knockdown
- **Whip (M):** Reach 3, 5🗡, 1H, Fearsome 2, Grapple
- **Brutal Blows (M):** Reach 1, 4🗡, Stun, Nonlethal
- **Bully (T):** Range C, 2🗡 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Strength from the Sea:** These slavers are used to combat aboard ship and only suffer penalties in the fiercest of weather.
- **Slaver:** Slavers can spend 1 Momentum to grant an attack the Fearsome Quality.

OVERBOARD!

After two rounds of combat, the ship's hull finally breaks apart, cracking like thunder. Player characters above deck are thrown overboard into the sea from the impact. They must swim to safety, but the rough waters make swimming difficult. They must succeed in a Challenging (D2) Athletics test to stay above water. Any player character that fails this test begins to drown, suffering 1 Fatigue per round unless offset by Momentum. If they find themselves submerged,

they must make an Average (D1) Resistance test or suffer Fatigue (see page 21). The test must be made each round the player character remains submerged. The test's Difficulty increases by one step on each consecutive turn.

Player characters can use the Aid action to assist their allies. Anyone in the dinghy is in for a rough ride but is otherwise safe. In the rolling chaos of the sea, the player characters spy some slavers clinging to broken wood and swimming toward shore. The hated Captain Kahero is among them.

However, during their desperate escape, Delia is either washed overboard or flung from the dinghy, only to disappear beneath the waves. Player characters may attempt to rescue her, but she is apparently lost. It is only during a brief calm that they see strange, scaled and humanoid forms pull her deep beneath the black waves, then swim to shore with her limp form in tow. These creatures move far too fast for the player characters to catch them. They'll have to rescue her on land.

By the time the player characters make it to shore, the creatures have spirited Delia and a few slavers off into the thick jungle, leaving behind an obvious trail of splayed, web-toed feet mixed with bare human feet.

The gamemaster should strive to keep this part of the adventure action-packed and quick-moving. The water is very rough. Player character should be able to to make a few tests to build Momentum for use later in the adventure. If a player character fails two Athletics tests or suffers a Complication, they are overwhelmed by the waves and sucked under, perhaps being taken by the

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters differ from player characters in a few ways. They use Fields of Expertise instead of individual skills, and each is defined as either a Minion, Toughened, or as a Nemesis.

- **MINIONS** use only 1d20 when performing a skill test. They have lower Vigor and Resolve, and are out of the fight (dead, unconscious, or fleeing) if they take 1 Harm. They cannot take Reactions, but new Minions can be brought into an action scene at the cost of 1 Doom per Minion.

- **TOUGHENED** foes have higher Vigor and Resolve, and use 2d20 as normal when acting. They can take 2 Harms before being incapacitated. The gamemaster can bring a new Toughened foe into an action scene for 2 Doom.

- **NEMESIS**-level foes have much higher Vigor and Resolve, and can take Harms as per player characters. They roll 2d20 for tests, and are often the equals of player characters. A Nemesis can spend 3 Doom as if it were a Fortune point.

Mobs

Individually, Minions are not much of a challenge, but up to five Minions can work together in MOBS, each adding their d20s into a combined test that may exceed the normal limit of 5d20. They must all make the same attack or perform the same skill together.

If attacked, damage inflicted on a Mob carries over from one to another, if the first is taken out by a Harm and enough damage remains.

Fields of Expertise

Non-player characters use Fields of Expertise instead of individual skills. These values serve as both Expertise and Focus for skills included in each group.

- **COMBAT** includes Melee, Parry, Ranged Weapons, and Warfare.

- **FORTITUDE** includes Discipline, Resistance, and Survival.

- **MOVEMENT** includes Acrobatics, Athletics, Sailing, and Stealth.

- **SENSES** includes Observation, Insight, and Thievery.

- **SOCIAL** includes Command, Counsel, Persuade, and Society.

- **KNOWLEDGE** includes Alchemy, Animal Handling, Craft, Healing, Lore, Linguistics, and Sorcery.

mysterious creatures. Any player character that persists makes their way to shore but falls unconscious upon reaching the beach.

RUDE AWAKENING

Barely having survived drowning, and washed up on a jungle shore littered with bodies, the player characters are in dire circumstances. Surviving slavers come ashore some distance from where the player characters landed. The two parties eye each other, a fire for revenge burning in Kahero's eyes. But neither group is ready to charge the other after these trials. The reckoning must come later. The ship is not salvageable. A total of fifteen slavers, plus Kahero, remain.

Unconscious player characters regain consciousness by passing an Average (D1) Resistance test. Failure causes 1 point of Fatigue. Once recovered, the player characters can take in the situation and plot a course of action. The wreckage on the beach is useless, but the player characters have already obtained their captured equipment. They may be exhausted, but they are armed.

PREDATOR AND PREY

The player characters may engage the slavers on the beach, but neither side is at their best. Additionally, the slavers significantly outnumber the player characters, and are also armed to the teeth. Delia is the real prize anyway, and whoever gets to her first reaps the rewards. As such, the player characters should feel motivated to venture into the jungle where they saw the creatures abscond with her.

If the slavers give immediate pursuit, the two parties must engage in a Struggle. The players should decide how they are evading their pursuers, and pick the appropriate skill to use. For example, players must make an Average (D1) Stealth to hide, an Average (D1) Warfare or Survival test to set a trap, or an Average (D1) Athletics test to outrun the slavers.

The slavers roll the appropriate opposed skill against an Average (D1) Difficulty. This should play like a narrative chase scene. Encourage the players to be creative and narrate how they evade slavers by describing their successes and failures. Player characters evade the slavers when they collectively score 4 Momentum. Any Complication costs 1 point of Momentum. If the slavers generate 4 Momentum, the player characters still escape the slavers, but will each suffer 1 Trauma from the stress and exhaustion of the chase.

If the player characters stay and fight, they face Captain Kahero and fifteen slavers. The slavers are armed with whips, cutlasses, clubs, and nets. Kahero orders his men to take escaped slaves alive, but if wounded Kahero orders his slavers to kill their opponents. He calls for retreat if he suffers 2 Wounds or if five of the slavers are killed.

CAPTAIN KAHERO (NEMESIS)

Kahero's father left him a ship, scars from his belt, and the ruthlessness needed to be a slaver. He knows that to create a slave, he must destroy the person. Kahero prefers to mock a foe rather than threaten them. He can use a person's anger against them, a master of knowing exactly what inflames a given individual.

Kahero blames the player characters for the loss of his ship, blaming them for the distraction, if not the crash. He also realizes Delia's affections were a ruse to get his keys, and plans his revenge upon her as well. Any recovered slaves also mitigate his losses.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	9	10	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	2

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** 1 (Clothing), Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Cutlass (M):** Reach 2, 5🦅, Unbalanced, Fearsome, Vicious 1
- **Cudgel (M):** Reach 2, 5🦅, 1H, Stun, Knockdown
- **Whip (M):** Reach 3, 5🦅, 1H, Fearsome 2, Grapple
- **Brutal Blows (M):** Reach 1, 4🦅, Stun, Nonlethal
- **Bully (T):** Range C, 2🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Slaver:** Kahero can spend 1 Momentum to add the Fearsome Quality to an attack.
- **Scarier Than Thou:** Kahero grants all slavers within Close range a Courage Soak 3.
- **Just Another Uprising:** Kahero has put down slaves before. When attacked by more than one character the basic Difficulty to hit Kahero increases by the number of enemies within his Reach.

NOTES

- **Fearsome Reputation:** Kahero can spend 1 Doom (Repeatable) to add +2🦅 to his Steely Glare.
- **I Know Your Name!:** Kahero can spend 2 Doom to call out an opponent. This allows Kahero to make a free Steely Glare attack with any damage causing Despair rather than mental damage. In addition, unless the character makes every effort to engage Kahero in combat that character suffers 1 additional Despair each round of that action scene.

DRUMS OF THE DEEP

If they evaded or defeated the slavers, the player characters may take a moment to rest. Regardless, at some point of some relative calm, the jungle echoes with a continuous rhythm of ceremonial drums. Following the sound of the drums leads to a large swamp where the broken ruins of Kutallu lay on the opposite side. Should the player characters choose to follow the tracks on the beach, an Average (D1) Survival test reveals they head in the direction of the drums.

Kutallu is partially submerged deep in the swampy jungle, and the cyclopean structures jut from its brackish waters, gradually drawing the eye to a great ziggurat in the city's ruined center. The towering remains of a pair of statues loom above the treetops. One, in relatively good condition, clearly depicts one of the creatures that abducted Delia: a Dweller of the Deep. The second statue has long since crumbled with age. The player characters

should easily deduce that Delia was taken into the city. A Simple (D0) Lore or Sorcery test reveals that the drums are related to a ritual.

TRAVELING TO KUTALLU

To reach Kutallu the player characters must transverse the jungle and the dangers therein. Navigating the jungle requires a Challenging (D2) Survival test or a Daunting (D3) Resistance, Athletics, or Observation test, as the player characters work their way through the thick foliage. Those who fail the test suffer Fatigue. For a Complication, the gamemaster should use the Doom generated to trigger one of the optional jungle encounters below. Alternately, the gamemaster can have the player character suffer additional Fatigue.

The jungle and swamps swallowed what was once a grand canal city, and the saltwater swamp is littered with the signs of a once great civilization. Obelisks, partially sunken ruins, and vines cover statues of Dwellers that jut from the swampy water. Bizarre stonework depicting strange beasts and brutal rituals abounds. Any Discipline tests have their Difficulty increased by one step due to the unnerving nature of the ruins.

It is a half hour's trek to Kutallu. The drums beating in the background should put pressure on the player characters. Faced with the loss of valuable stock, Kahero and

his slavers will be drawn to the drums in hopes of finding more slaves — escaped or new. While recovery of Fatigue is relatively simple, there is no time for the player characters to rest during the journey to Kutallu, or else they will forfeit Delia's safety and the fortune it will yield.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

These encounters are available to make the adventure more challenging, and are especially useful as means of adding tension. Not every encounter has to be a combat: even Conan knew what battles were worth fighting.

Slaver Attack (1 Doom)

If yet undefeated, Kahero and his slavers attempt to enslave the player characters. Drawn to the drums looking for Delia, Kahero and a squad of five slavers attack. The player characters can fight or evade them as above (see *Predator and Prey*, page XX). If they fought in a previous encounter, take their losses into account.

BACKGROUND

For millennia, the Dwellers of the Deep watched from the ocean depths, occasionally rising from the water to enslave and rule over the bestial race called humankind. Over a thousand years ago, the Dwellers built a grand city to honor their ocean gods. Kutallu became a monument to these gods, and the Dwellers' empire spread out across the dense jungle coasts of what is now the southern Black Kingdoms. In time, this small empire crumbled and all that remained were the ruins of Kutallu as the Dwellers retreated to the ocean depths.

Those few Dwellers that remained in this watery ruin worshipped a beast resting in the pit of Kutallu, and took local tribes people as sacrifices to this foul abomination. Kutallu is now an overgrown ruin that has faded from all memory, found now only in ragged tomes and crumbling scrolls.

Recently a Stygian sorceress named Samiria, a worshipper of the Dwellers' deep and ancient gods, spent a decade using manipulation, seduction, and enthrallment to recruit adherents. She built a cult to these forgotten gods of the deep, but sought too much power, too overtly. Eventually, the lords of Khemi drove her cult from the city, but not before she discovered the location of Kutallu. Samiria led her followers on a harrowing journey through the jungles of the south. Signs and portents guided her to the ruins of Kutallu where she offered herself and her adherents to the Dwellers — foul hybrids were thus bred.

Now, Samiria uses her sorcery to summon storms, dashing ships upon the coastal reef. The Dwellers and her human followers bring the survivors to the temple to be cast into the hungry maw of unspeakable abomination lurking in the pit of Kutallu.

Swamp Crocodiles (1 Doom)

While working their way through the brackish, waist deep water, sucking mud, and dense growth of jungle swamp, four crocodiles spy the player characters. These vicious beasts slide off the hummocks they sun themselves on and try to ambush (page 10) the player characters, taking advantage of their *Ambush Predator* ability.

CROCODILE (TOUGHENED)

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	4	5	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	10	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	—
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 10, Resolve 8
- **Soak:** Armor 2, Courage —

ATTACKS

- **Snapping Jaw (M):** Reach 2, 4 🦅, Grappling, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Aquatic:** A crocodile can hold its breath for up to fifteen minutes before requiring a Fortitude test.
- **Ambush Predator:** A crocodile gains two bonus Momentum on Movement tests when in water. Further, it reduces the cost of the Interrupt Doom spend to zero when it begins its turn hidden and submerged beneath a body of water.
- **Drowning:** When in water, if a crocodile successfully grabs its prey, the grabbed creature will begin to drown. See *Fatigue and Despair* on page 21 for details on drowning. This is in addition to any damage the crocodile inflicts on the grabbed enemy.
- **Sluggish Gait:** A crocodile cannot take the Sprint Action unless it is in water.

RUINS OF KUTALLU

The jungle and swamps reclaimed much of Kutallu, devouring the remains of the city built a millennium ago. The only functional ruin left is the central ziggurat, a crumbling building once serving as its grand temple. A few outbuildings near a small lake allow hybrids and Dwellers easy access to the water. The jungle loam cover much: thick vines run up the sides of buildings. Trees grow through some structures. The remaining streets are lined with ancient, decorative stonework featuring the hideous creatures and their human slaves. The sound of the drums comes from the ziggurat. The chants are in a language unknown to man.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Slave Pens:** This collection of outbuildings lies before the temple entrance. Samiria and the Dwellers keep slaves and potential sacrifices locked in these pens. There are three stone cells with bars made of wood and twine. The pens are empty.

- **Dweller Lairs:** On the west side of the ziggurat are lairs where the Dwellers make their home. There is little of value in this location. Part of the building is submerged and Dwellers lie in wait in the water. The Dwellers will attack (See *The Ruins Have Eyes*, below) after the player characters have spent some time searching the area. A successful Average (D1) Observation test yields one of the Dwellers' coral knives.

- **Ziggurat Entrance:** The entrance to the temple is a heavy stone portal carved in the likeness of a four-tentacled beast with a great beaked maw. On either side of the portal stand three-yard-high statues of Dwellers from the Deep, arms stretched to the sky.

- **Ziggurat Temple:** The stepped ziggurat dominates this area, and the entire surface of the temple is carved with reliefs of Dwellers and their history (see page 23 for more information). At the base of the temple, a staircase leads down. The player characters can hear the rhythmic sounds of drums and chanting from these depths.

THE RUINS HAVE EYES

In Kutallu, the player characters feel as if they're being watched. They are correct. A small band of Samiria's hybrids and Dwellers patrol the ruins and track any trespassers. A successful Challenging (D2) Observation test reveals forms moving among the foliage and the ruins. While most of the cultists and hybrids are in the temple worshipping the beast in the pit, the Dwellers are ready to attack the player characters and take them captive. The Dwellers act if the player characters investigate the Dweller lairs location, or if they approach the ziggurat's entrance. Two groups of Dwellers assault them. The groups consist of one Dweller and three hybrid minions.

If the fight happens in the Dweller Lairs, they may use the *Croaking Tide* ability. If the Dwellers are defeated, any hybrid minions attempt to flee. If the player characters manage to capture any of the minions, they mock the player characters gleefully describing how their "friends" will serve as sacrifice to their hideous demon-god.

DWELLER OF THE DEEP (TOUGHENED, HORROR)

From the furthest depths of the ocean, these amphibious humanoids have watched the rise and fall of the cities of humankind, as the hairy creatures slouched upwards from apedom and back downwards into primitive savagery. Though the Dwellers' language is barely pronounceable by human tongues, their terrible, croaking language is sometimes used by sorcerers to call to them and to summon them, or to speak to the mightiest of their kind. They are immensely long-lived, and are well acquainted with the ways of humankind, even able to mimic human speech to limited success.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	7	7	10
Agility	**Brawn**		**Coordination**
8	10		8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	3	**Senses**	—
Knowledge	—	**Social**	—

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 10, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 3, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Claws (M):** Reach 1, 4 ⚕, Grappling
- **Strange Coral Knives (M):** 5 ⚕, Hidden 1, Piercing 2
- **Hideous Croaking (T):** Range C, 3 ⚕ mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Amphibious:** The dwellers of the deep suffer no penalty to any Action when swimming, and can spend unlimited time underwater
- **Fear 1:** Anyone encountering a Dweller must immediately attempt an Average (D1) Discipline test suffer the Dweller's Hideous Croaking attack damage, once per scene.
- **The Gift of Y'ha-nthlei:** Any mortal dragged under the waves by a dweller gains the *Amphibious* ability as long as the Dweller is in personal contact. This is seldom to the mortal's benefit, and ends when the dweller releases the surface dweller.

DOOM SPENDS

- **The Croaking Tide:** A dweller seldom comes alone. A dweller can summon a mob of lesser dwellers to attend them at any time. The lesser dwellers are Mobs of five Minions, each with half Vigor and a Resolve Soak of 1 (Scales). The Mobs will emerge from the surf, often at extreme range. The summoning takes the dweller one Standard Action, and one Mob is summoned for every two Doom spent. These Mobs will often be used by the dweller to drag nearby victims down into the depths of the sea.

THE BEAST IN THE PIT

Sneaking down the stairs, the player characters find a half-sunken temple complex. The temple proper consists of a ring of small rooms and an inner worship chamber. All the cultists are engaged in worship while Samiria performs a ritual. Their awful chants periodically come to a sudden stop as Samiria begins a new chant herself. This cycle continues until it is time to sacrifice the victims to the beast in the pit —an unspeakable abomination called Kutallu, sharing its name with the city.

The player characters can easily sneak around the outer ring unseen, requiring a Simple (D0) Stealth test to avoid detection. The outer section of the temple is a series of smaller rooms and shrines dedicated to Kutallu. One of the rooms in the outer section nearest the stairs serves as Samiria's quarters. Her personal belongings are atop a pedestal topped with a ceremonial golden bowl full of water. A successful Challenging (D2) Sorcery or Lore test recognizes this as a sorcerous scrying device.

The inner chamber has a large circular pit in the center. At the far side of the pit is a platform with stairs on either side. Halfway to the platform are landings, upon which a pair of drummers beat constantly upon large drums. Samiria stands on the platform, with five sacrificial victims chained behind her. These victims are a mix of slaves, slavers, and, finally, Delia.

Extending across the pit from the platform is a walkway. Kneeling on the edge of the walkway is a sacrifice held fast by two hybrids, humans showing the signs of their Dweller ancestry in their pale clammy skin, long mouths, and wide, staring eyes. A dozen hybrid cultists lie prostrate around the pit.

The Feeding of the Deep

After a few moments, the ceremony hits a crescendo, and the first victim is cast into the pit. When the first victim falls into the pit a great, gurgling roar echoes about and Kutallu rises in fury. Player characters may need to make Daunting

PARTY CRASHERS

The gamemaster may choose to add additional complexity to this encounter with the arrival of Captain Kahero and any remaining slavers. Perhaps they will prove a distraction enabling the player characters to seize Delia unnoticed, providing ample cannon fodder for the Dwellers and Kutallu to devour, or they may even throw in with the player characters, recognizing that their only hope for survival is an alliance.

The gamemaster may even wish to have Kahero be one of the captured slaves, making a desperate bid to keep himself alive by betraying the player characters and revealing Delia's true worth to Samiria.

(D3) Discipline tests from seeing Kutallu (see page 27). The ritual continues, and a new victim is fed to Kutallu about every thirty seconds, the creature emerging again. Delia is intended to be the last victim in the line of sacrifices.

If the player characters try to get to Delia, Samiria spots them easily. She shouts a cry of alarm, and her worshipers attack. The cultists are three Mobs of four hybrid cultists apiece. Samiria leads a squad of four cultists, commanding them to continue throwing victims into the pit. One victim is thrown into the pit per round. If the player characters make their way up to the platform, the drummers attempt to hold the player characters off using clubs. After two rounds of sacrifices, Kutallu turns its ire on the player characters.

Samiria will not leave the platform, and fights any character trying to take Delia. As a last ditch effort, she drags Delia out onto the walkway and threatens to throw her into the pit. If the beast is still alive, this is a perfect opportunity for a character, or Delia, to knock Samiria into the pit of Kutallu. If so, the loathsome horror shows her no special favor: she is neither a Dweller or a hybrid, and is devoured like all the rest.

CULTIST (MINION)

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	7	9	7

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	—
Fortitude	—	Senses	—
Knowledge	1	Social	1

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 4, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** Armor 1 (Clothing), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Ritual Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 3 ⚑, Hidden 1, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 3 ⚑ mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fanatical:** A cultist may re-roll a single d20 on any Fortitude test.

SAMIRIA, CULT LEADER (NEMESIS)

Samiria was once a slave, but found freedom when the slave ship was destroyed in a storm off the coast of Shem. She should have drowned with her fellow slaves, but instead she washed up on the shore, granted gifts by the Deep. Inspired by her faith and abilities, her cult attracted many followers. Samiria searched the greatest libraries in Shem and eventually in Khemi for signs of the deep-dwelling ones. In time, the priests of Set drove her out. She fled with a select few followers, looking for the Dwellers. She found them in Kutallu.

ATTRIBUTES			
Awareness	**Intelligence**	**Personality**	**Willpower**
8	10	11	10
Agility	**Brawn**		**Coordination**
9	8		8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Combat	1	**Movement**	—
Fortitude	—	**Senses**	1
Knowledge	2	**Social**	3

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 8, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 1 (Clothing), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Ritual Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 3 ⚑, Hidden 1, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 4 ⚑ mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fanatical:** Samiria may re-roll a single d20 on any Fortitude test.
- **Beloved:** Any cult member within reach will attempt to prevent Samiria coming to harm, Interposing themselves or using Defend reactions to assist her.
- **Token of Favor:** Samiria has a relic amulet sacred to the Kutallu, and revered by the cult. Once per scene, she may brandish it to receive +1d20 (up to the maximum 5d20) to inspire cult members with a Social test.

KUTALLU, UNSPEAKABLE ABOMINATION (HORROR, NEMESIS)

A horror out of mortal space and time, this beaked, many-tentacled beast is an abomination humankind was not meant to lay eyes upon. The Dwellers from the Deep worship it as a god.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	8	6	12

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
6	14 (3)	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	3	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS AND SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 10, Resolve 12
- **Soak:** Armor 6 (Horror), Courage —

ATTACKS

- **Grasping Tentacles (M):** Reach 3, 9🦅, Knockdown
- **Feeding Tentacles (M):** Reach 2, 6🦅, Grappling
- **Unholy Writhing (T):** Range C, 6🦅 mental, Area, Piercing 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 3:** When seeing Kutallu, player characters must attempt a Challenging (D2) Discipline test or suffer the damage of the Unholy Writhing attack (see above).
- **Inured to Cold, Disease, Fear, Pain, and Poison:** Kutallu takes no damage from these.
- **Unnatural Brawn 3:** Any Brawn tests earn 3 extra successes.
- **Personal Doom 5:** Kutallu has a personal pool of 5 Doom for its sole use. It can use Doom from the normal pool if this reserve is depleted, but upon Kutallu's death or defeat, these points are removed from play.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Gargantuan Maw:** If a player character is knocked prone by Kutallu's tentacles it can immediately attempt to savage the target with its beaked maw. This costs 2 Doom and deals 9🦅, Vicious 2.

WRAPPING THE ADVENTURE

If rescued, Delia makes good on her promise of riches. The gamemaster should feel comfortable ending the adventure at this point. Any surviving slavers, looking upon the carnage in the room, turn and run away, leaving Kahero to suffer his own fate.

The players may want to keep playing. Remember, there is a noblewoman to escort home and a ship in desperate need of repair.

Adventure awaits… but that is another story.

PAPIUS VARRO, NOBLE WARRIOR

AGILITY — 10

Skill	TN	Focus
Acrobatics	12	2
Melee	13	3
Stealth	11	1

AWARENESS — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Insight	8	—
Observation	8	—
Survival	9	1
Thievery	8	—

BRAWN — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Athletics	8	—
Resistance	11	3

COORDINATION — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Parry	11	3
Ranged Weapons	9	1
Sailing	8	—

INTELLIGENCE — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Alchemy	8	—
Craft	8	—
Healing	9	1
Linguistics	8	—
Lore	9	1
Warfare	8	—

PERSONALITY — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Animal Handling	10	1
Command	10	1
Counsel	10	1
Persuade	10	1
Society	11	2

WILLPOWER — 11

Skill	TN	Focus
Discipline	13	2
Sorcery	11	—

Born in northern Aquilonia on the border of the Khauran. Papius spent much of his youth in Cimmeria, his father a lesser noble trying to recruit the surly hillmen to fight alongside him in revolt against King Vilerus. After his family's estate was seized by the cruel king, Varro took knightly orders and roamed throughout the land.

Varro is tall and brown-haired, with grey eyes and strong jaw, a model of Aquilonian gentry.

Varro was protecting an Aquilonian noblewoman named Dellia Attus, and was captured with her while sailing off the coast of Argo. He is ruled by a sense of duty, sworn to defend her. He does not like M'tanga overmuch, as he detests slavery.

BACKGROUND

- **Homeland:** Aquilonia
- **Caste:** Petty Nobility
- **Nature:** Stoic
- **Education:** Educated on the Battlefield
- **Story:** Exile to the Estates
- **Trait:** Cast Aside
- **War Story:** Survived a Duel
- **Languages:** Aquilonian, Cimmerian

SOAK

Armor	3 (Chainmail, All Locations, Noisy)
Courage	2

FORTUNE POINTS

STRESS

Vigor								
Resolve								

HARMS

Wounds				
Trauma				

ATTACKS

- **Arming Sword (M):** Reach 2, 4🪶, 1H, Parrying
- **Shield (M):** Reach 2, 2🪶, 1H, Knockdown, Shield 2
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 3🪶 mental, Stun

TALENTS

- **Cosmopolitan:** Varro can speak to anyone else with this talent, no matter what languages they speak.
- **Courageous:** Varro can re-roll one d20 on Discipline tests. He gains 2 Courage Soak.
- **No Mercy:** When making a Melee attack, Varro can re-roll 1🪶.
- **Iron Will:** Varro recovers both Vigor and Resolve with Recover Actions, regaining the same amount of each (2, +2 per Momentum spent). Varro can add 2 Doom to use a Recover Action as a Minor Action, but does not get to re-roll Cover dice.
- Varro's talents of **Sheltered**, **Subject**, and **A Modicum of Comfort** are not useful in this adventure.

OTHER BELONGINGS

An ancient piece of jewelry, its surface covered in verdigris.

HYPATIA VESNIUS, ARCHER

AGILITY — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Acrobatics	11	2
Melee	10	2
Stealth	10	1

AWARENESS — 11

Skill	TN	Focus
Insight	11	—
Observation	12	1
Survival	14	3
Thievery	11	—

BRAWN — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Athletics	9	—
Resistance	11	2

COORDINATION — 11

Skill	TN	Focus
Parry	13	2
Ranged Weapons	15	4
Sailing	11	—

INTELLIGENCE — 7

Skill	TN	Focus
Alchemy	7	—
Craft	8	1
Healing	7	—
Linguistics	7	—
Lore	7	—
Warfare	8	1

PERSONALITY — 7

Skill	TN	Focus
Animal Handling	8	1
Command	7	—
Counsel	7	—
Persuade	7	—
Society	8	1

WILLPOWER — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Discipline	11	3
Sorcery	8	—

A hardy native of the Bossonian Marches, Hypatia grew up always alert to an attack by the forest-dwellers out of Pictland. She was conscripted from an early age into the Aquilonian military and spent years serving such unworthy masters. After a flood almost killed her regiment, she mustered out, seeking adventure. Years of near-poverty have left her eager to reverse her fortunes.

Hypatia is tall and sturdy, with light brown hair and grey eyes, her gear well-made and practical.

When her ship was captured, Hypatia shot out the eye of the slaver captain (though he does not know it), and she is eager to complete the job. Conditioned by her military service, she trusts Varro and dislikes Kellen.

BACKGROUND

- **Homeland:** Bossonian Marches
- **Caste:** Warrior
- **Nature:** Wrathful
- **Education:** Family Footsteps
- **Story:** Glorious Battle
- **Trait:** Veteran
- **War Story:** Prevented a Disaster
- **Languages:** Aquilonian, Shemitish

SOAK

Armor	3 (Mail Vest: Torso, Noisy; Helmet: Head, Heavy)
Courage	3

FORTUNE POINTS

STRESS

Vigor							
Resolve							

HARMS

Wounds			
Trauma			

ATTACKS

- **Broadsword (M):** Reach 2, 6 🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying
- **Bossonian Longbow (R):** Range M, 7 🦅, Piercing 1, Volley (2 loads)
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 2 🦅 mental, Stun

TALENTS

- **Accurate:** Hypatia can re-roll 2 🦅 for Ranged Combat tests.
- **Courageous:** Hypatia can re-roll 1d20 on Discipline tests. She gains 3 Courage Soak.
- **Shoot for the Horizon:** Hypatia reduces the Difficulty of increased Range by one step.
- Hypatia's talents of **A Modicum of Comfort**, **Hunter**, **Sentry**, and **Subject** are not useful in this adventure.

OTHER BELONGINGS

A solid, well-crafted armband made of copper and silver.

M'TANGA NEDJA, PIRATE

AGILITY — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Acrobatics	10	1
Melee	10	1
Stealth	12	3

AWARENESS — 12

Skill	TN	Focus
Insight	12	—
Observation	17	5
Survival	13	1
Thievery	14	2

BRAWN — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Athletics	9	1
Resistance	9	1

COORDINATION — 10

Skill	TN	Focus
Parry	11	1
Ranged Weapons	11	1
Sailing	12	2

INTELLIGENCE — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Alchemy	8	—
Craft	9	1
Healing	8	—
Linguistics	8	—
Lore	9	1
Warfare	8	—

PERSONALITY — 8

Skill	TN	Focus
Animal Handling	8	—
Command	8	—
Counsel	8	—
Persuade	8	—
Society	9	1

WILLPOWER — 7

Skill	TN	Focus
Discipline	8	1
Sorcery	7	—

A corsair of the Black Kingdoms, M'tanga was once a prince, but was exiled by an elder brother who claimed the crown. Thrown into poverty, M'tanga roved up and down the coast, eventually becoming a sailor and then later a pirate. He has won kings' bounties and squandered them just as easily. Currently he is a pirate without a ship.

M'tanga is tall, muscular, and bald. He cuts a roguish figure, clad in tattered finery from a variety of ports.

While drunk, he was press-ganged into captivity, and is now a slave. He became entranced with a fellow captive, a noblewoman named Delia Attus, and he has promised to free her. M'tanga respects, but does not like Varro, and gets along well with Kellen.

BACKGROUND

- **Homeland:** Black Kingdoms
- **Caste:** Outcast
- **Nature:** Sneaky
- **Education:** Apprenticed Abroad
- **Story:** The Charity of Honest Men
- **Trait:** Debt
- **War Story:** Gained (and Lost) a Great Treasure
- **Languages:** Kushite, Aquilonian

SOAK

Armor	1 (Padded Jerkin, Torso/Arms)
Courage	—

FORTUNE POINTS

STRESS

Vigor								
Resolve								

HARMS

Wounds				
Trauma				

ATTACKS

- **Sabre (M):** Reach 2, 4 🗡, 1H, Parrying
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 2 🗡 mental, Stun

TALENTS

- **Sharp Senses:** M'tanga can re-roll one d20 for Observation tests.
- **Perfect Memory:** With an Average (D1) Observation test, M'tanga can investigate any area he's been to, even if he is not in that location any more.
- **Sailor:** M'tanga can re-roll one d20 for Sailing tests
- **Living Shadow 1:** M'tanga gains +1 Momentum for Stealth tests.
- M'tanga's talents of **Strife**, **Embittered**, and **Survivor** are not useful in this adventure.

OTHER BELONGINGS

A share in a small pirate ship; a piece of rough hammered jewelry.

KELLAN, BARBARIAN

AGILITY — 10

Skill	TN	Focus
Acrobatics	12	2
Melee	13	3
Stealth	12	2

AWARENESS — 7

Skill	TN	Focus
Insight	7	—
Observation	8	1
Survival	9	2
Thievery	7	—

BRAWN — 11

Skill	TN	Focus
Athletics	12	1
Resistance	12	1

COORDINATION — 10

Skill	TN	Focus
Parry	13	3
Ranged Weapons	10	—
Sailing	10	—

INTELLIGENCE — 6

Skill	TN	Focus
Alchemy	6	—
Craft	6	—
Healing	7	1
Linguistics	6	—
Lore	7	1
Warfare	6	—

PERSONALITY — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Animal Handling	11	2
Command	9	—
Counsel	11	2
Persuade	10	1
Society	9	—

WILLPOWER — 9

Skill	TN	Focus
Discipline	11	2
Sorcery	9	—

A rough and uncivilized Cimmerian hillman from the southern reaches of his land, Kellan sought adventure, inspired by the tales told by the Aquilonian renegades that tried (unsuccessfully) to recruit his folk to their cause. His village was destroyed by the forces of King Vilerus, and he barely survived, the bitter memory driving him southward in search of revenge.

Eventually captured, Kellan was sold into slavery and has made a fast friend with M'tanga, who he sees as a kindred spirit. He remembers well the arrows of the Bossonian archers, and does not trust Hypatia.

Like most of his kin, Kellan is tall and broad-muscled, light-eyed, dark-haired, and dark of complexion. His garments are rough, in the fashion of the rugged hillfolk from which he came.

BACKGROUND

- **Homeland:** Cimmeria
- **Caste:** Herder
- **Nature:** Supportive
- **Education:** Elder Mentor
- **Story:** Raiders
- **Trait:** Vengeful
- **War Story:** Survived a Massacre
- **Languages:** Cimmerian, Aquilonian

SOAK

Armor	3 (Mail Vest: Torso, Noisy; Helmet: Head, Heavy)
Courage	2

FORTUNE POINTS

STRESS

Vigor							
Resolve							

HARMS

Wounds				
Trauma				

ATTACKS

- **Battle Axe (M):** Reach 2, 6🗡, Unbalanced, Intense, Vicious 1
- **Mace (M):** Reach 2, 5🗡, Knockdown, Stun, Piercing 1
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 3🗡 mental, Stun

TALENTS

- **No Mercy:** When making a Melee attack, Kellen can re-roll 1🗡.
- **Courageous:** Kellen can re-roll 1d20 on Discipline tests. He gains 2 Courage Soak.
- **Deflection:** Kellen reduces the Doom spent making Defend Reactions using the Parry skill by 1, to a minimum of 0. This stacks with the weapon's Parrying Quality.
- **Blood on Steel:** When making a Melee attack, Kellen can spend 1 Momentum to add Vicious 1 to the weapon, or increase Vicious by +1.
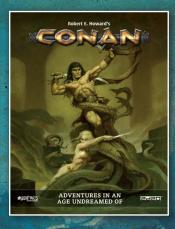- Kellan's talents of **Hunter**, **Subject**, and **Sentry** are not useful in this adventure.

OTHER BELONGINGS

A piece of rough hammered jewelry; furs and pelts sewn with threads of a quality befitting his station.
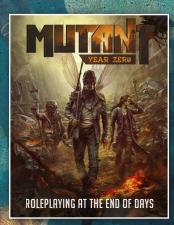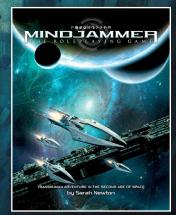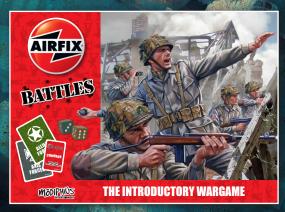
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